

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, PLAISTERS LANE, SUTTON POYNTZ  
INTERIM REPORT FOR SUTTON POYNTZ PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Introduction

In view of the limited time that has been available to study this problem, this statement attempts no more than a definition of scope and intentions. It provides no answers. This will be taken further and it will be shown how these objectives might be achieved.

Because it would be difficult to establish objective criteria in this matter, these comments should not be seen as representing the only answer. Rather they are an attempt to increase the number of ideas available from which a satisfactory result might come.

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Summary

It is suggested that the distinguishing feature of a village is its variety. The new inhabitants should come from a broad cross-section of society and the size and type of house should differ accordingly.

A village grows slowly in a haphazard fashion, taking advantage of chance relationships. This development should be seen to grow from the parent village, rather than be a separate unit.

The design of the individual houses too might be varied. Indigenous materials, including stone or even thatch, might well be used, but in a manner appropriate to our own age.

Imaginative landscaping will complete a good scheme and make up for much in a bad one.

The introduction of the car to modern housing has brought many problems. These can be solved in various efficient and attractive ways that economize on land use and are safe.

3

Density

(a) Social structure of new development

In all the proposals so far various densities from low to high have been considered.

A village is a small variegated society. In this it differs from urban residential areas which tend to be more uniform, being inhabited by people of similar age and station in life. There is a feeling that the numbers of houses on the site should be restricted, merely lessening the impact on the village. This may still, however, be the wrong solution. Even if only on a smaller scale it would still attract a very limited section of the community and this would change the social balance within the village.

Perhaps a varied type of development that attracted a very broad cross-section of society would be the most appropriate. It might contain terraces of lower priced houses that might appeal to young families as well as larger, detached houses that might attract older or more affluent people.

(b) Capacity of the resources of the village

Although any new development will make demands on the resources of the village, a development that attracts a broad cross-section of society will not overload one particular resource. An example might be that a dense development would be likely to appeal to young families. This would introduce a large number of children of primary school age to the village. Is the local school capable of absorbing so many? A further consequence of this would be that some resources would be expanded (such as the school), whilst others that older age groups wanted to use might decline.

(c) Appearance

A village, and Sutton Poyntz is no exception, tends to be a jumble visually. This is an important part of its charm. Clusters of cottages are arranged with individual houses and buildings for work such as the mill or the waterworks. Some buildings, both domestic and agricultural, open directly into the road, others are set back from it by gardens or yards. Sometimes the view is shut off, sometimes it is open.

A uniform development of identical or similar houses set back from the road on an unvarying building line and set apart or together at the same distance will not look like this.

Variety in the size and layout of the houses is one object to achieve. Is a variety of landuses with perhaps



a workshop or studio too ambitious ? Individual people like to have sheds and greenhouses and such, these can look like a cancer ! But they can also add variety if allowed for and they are important to people.

(d) Cost

In order to achieve this objective of variety there might be a great difference in the prices of the houses. Some might sell for £6,000, one or two maybe for twice that figure or more. A village traditionally accommodates people of very different incomes in close proximity and this may be the reason many choose to live in them.

It would be so easy in our present age for the village to become dominated by a single section of the community. Although the village might superficially be the same attractive village, it will have lost its reason for being and so will in time lose its beauty for something that is seen to be a pretence.

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Relationship to surroundings

A village tends to grow slowly over a long period of time, buildings being added singly and their design, layout and orientation being closely governed by what is adjacent, other buildings, footpaths and open areas. An instantaneous large development can necessarily be less influenced by these and as a result lacks much of the intimate and varied character associated with a village.

A particular aspect of this that has already been identified is the overlooking of the two houses to the North of the site off Plaisters Lane.

Most of the attention in considering these proposals has been focussed on the scheme itself as a self-contained entity. It is important that it should not be self-contained but should be seen to be a natural expansion of the village and opportunities be taken to improve that part where the expansion occurs.

The site plans do not show what happens beyond the boundaries of the site except in regard to the overlooking of the houses in Plaisters Lane that has already been mentioned.

The entry to the site, however, could be a major opportunity to add to the quality and amenities of the village. It lies opposite to the bottom of Silver Street, the footpath that would connect it to the area around the mill pond. It is overlooked by a very lovely thatched

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terrace with a verandah, to the South East of which is a comparatively recent thatched stone house. Opposite to the entrance is a delightful thatched garage.

This area could become an important communal area. It is difficult to lay out houses upon it because of its awkward shape and size. It might be defined to the South by the end wall of the barn and to the West by part of the new development that could complement the thatched houses on the other side and so complete an enclosure. A further feature of the site is the view of the hills that rise steeply to the West and come around to enclose the village on the landward side.

This suggests a different approach to laying out the site. Perhaps instead of producing a logical layout that, whilst consistent within itself, pays little regard to its surroundings, every opportunity should be taken independently and every accident exploited within and around the site.

There seems to be a possibility that the land beyond the site might also ultimately be developed. There may or may not be cause for alarm here. One might ask where the development would stop. The high ground to the West, however, is sacrosanct and will presumably continue to be so. It does seem to be unfortunate that as the West side of Plaisters Lane has been developed no attempt has been made to relate the new groups of houses together. Perhaps by opening up this hinterland a second chance will be available to expand the village in a more adventurous manner. If this is contemplated, perhaps the question should be asked whether or not it is desirable, and if it is, opportunities built into the present scheme that can later be developed. As the statutory plan stands at the moment, however, this land is designated as agricultural land.

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#### Detailed design of the buildings

The design of buildings within villages tends to be a local tradition that has evolved over a long period of time. Until the rapid developments in transportation over the last 170 years this tradition tended to restrict itself to materials readily available locally.

In our present age, however, materials and components can more economically be supplied by large industrial concerns even though there may be no shortage of the local materials. The modern type of material is generally machine-made and although it may have other virtues it often lacks the variegated character of natural materials.



The traditional materials of the area are:-

- (a) Stone - Portland and Purbeck, either left with its natural finish or limewashed.
  - (b) Brick - several types within the village, although the greyish brown brick with the dark spots is possibly the one that seems most sympathetic.
  - (c) Thatch - combed Wheatreed
  - (d) Tiles - plain clay tiles
- To these have been added recently:-
- (e) Renderings - screeded flat and painted.
  - (f) Artificial stone blocks.
  - (g) Concrete slates and tiles.
  - (h) Corrugated iron.

To reproduce the style of a bygone age is not easy because it no longer comes naturally to the designer. Contemporary life has also changed the form of houses, for example, we now have garages for which there is no formal precedent. There is no reason, however, why traditional materials combined with modern materials cannot be used with common sense in a manner appropriate to our age.

In the hands of a rare designer, perhaps any material could be made to appear sympathetic, and it is impossible to be objective about how this should be done.

In the 'Financial Times' of Saturday, 21st of this month, there is an article on thatch. It is illustrated by a pair of new houses in Norfolk that were thatched. The houses appear modest in size and in every other respect featureless and ordinary. The thatch, however, makes a considerable difference.

There is a great deal of prejudice against thatch, much of which is unfounded. It can catch fire, although now the house below can be protected with asbestos insulation board. Although maintenance is needed, its life is considerably greater than that of many modern roofing materials that are accepted without question.

If thatch is used, it should be the indigenous combed Wheat reed. Netting should not be used because, apart from being unsightly, it fulfils no function. It is intended to keep birds from the thatch, but as the birds are smaller than the mesh used, it fails to do this.

Roofs are particularly important visually as they are seen against the sky. A common material, pitch or line can pull a disparate scheme together but within this discipline variety is needed to maintain interest. Roofs are not the place to make economies, either for visual or constructional reasons.

It is difficult to be objective about the details of houses, windows, doors, porches, chimneys and rainwater disposal, but they all provide rich opportunities for the designer. This does not mean that they should be elaborate, in this context, quite the reverse. They are, however, important to the scale of the house, and perhaps it is appropriate that this scale should be human. This does not mean, however, that imitation 'Georgian' windows should be used. In fact the detailed design of these is so poor that the intended effect is ruined.

As the virtues of variety were expressed earlier, so perhaps they are appropriate here. The village is very inconsistent in its use of materials and so might the new development be. For example, a block of garages might be thatched whilst slates are used elsewhere. Features such as dormers, porches and chimneys may appear on some houses but not on others. It goes without saying that it would be easy to overdo this.

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#### Landscaping

There is an old joke that whereas a doctor has to bury his mistakes, an architect can cover his with ivy. Ivy, in fact, is the one plant which should not be allowed to be anywhere near buildings as it can do great damage. There are harmless alternatives, many with flowers. Nevertheless it is true that planting can obscure unfortunate lines and junctions, it can introduce the human scale where this is absent and it can unite disparate elements into an apparent whole. Apart from this, landscape and planting can be used positively to make an already good scheme that much richer.

The village at present has many individual gardens that are well cared for and very beautiful. It also has many features in communal areas that contribute much to the overall character: the mill-pond with the willow trees is the most remarkable, but generally there are trees overhanging the road, flowers and shrubs tumbling over stone walls and rough footpaths.

There is a tendency in modern developments for individual houses to be far more remote from the community than in the traditional village. In Sutton Poyntz some houses open directly onto the footpath, others are set back behind small gardens, but all give a sense of intimacy which it would be easy to lose.

It is quite possible even with a footpath immediately outside a house to define separation and even individuality. One way of achieving this might be to separate the house from the path by no more than a flower bed that is bridged by the porch.



Furthermore, communal areas must be used. On the three schemes submitted, for example, there is an open area of land on the North boundary to avoid overlooking of the two adjacent houses. The intensity of use of this grass will decline in proportion to the distance from the road. That adjacent will be worn away, that at the boundary overgrown with weeds.

The ground surfaces of outdoor areas must be appropriate to their use in construction and appearance. Grass and tarmac with kerb stones is not good enough.

There is always a problem of maintaining communal landscape. The Planning Office has suggested three methods, one of which might be appropriate in this instance:-

- (a) landscape maintained by the developer;
- (b) developer endows capital sum to provide income to pay for maintenance. The money to make up the capital would, of course, be added to the price of each house. Thus on each of ten houses there might be £50 added to make up a sum of £500. This might produce £50 p.a. to pay to a landscape contractor to maintain the area.
- (c) The local authority could undertake the maintenance on the same basis as (b) if they had the resources to do this satisfactorily.

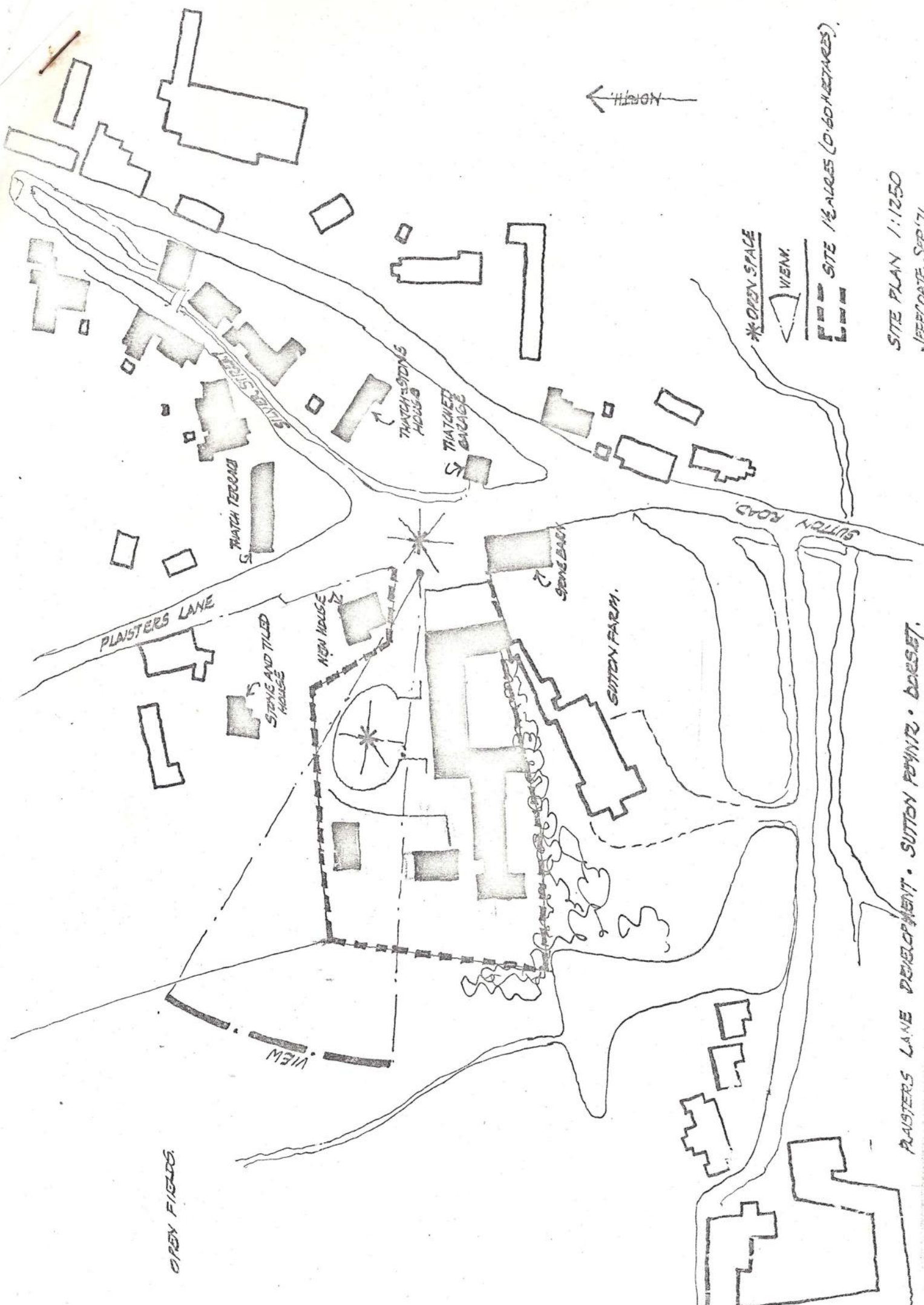
The larger the sum spent, of course, the more sophisticated the landscape could be. There are, however, many climbing plants, shrubs and trees that combine considerable effect with the minimum of maintenance.

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### Cars

Every house will have a car and visitors too will come by car. Facilities must be provided for this that combine efficiency with safety and effective land use. The provision of direct car access to each house tends to limit the variety of use to which outdoor spaces can be put. By concentrating the cars, space is left for children to play and for adults to stand or sit and talk.

There are many problems in trying to achieve this end and in recent years there have been many attempts to overcome them. Some of these have met with success and examples are illustrated in the MOHLG Design Bulletin 10.



OPEN FIELDS

VIEW

NORTH

\* OPEN SPACE

VIEW

0 10 20 30 METRES (0-60 FEET)

SITE PLAN 1:1250  
JEFFCOATE SEP 71.

PLAISTERS LANE DEVELOPMENT • SUTTON POINT • DORSET.



A - LARGE STONE HOUSE WITH GARAGE & WORKSHOP.

B - SMALL TERRACE HOUSES.

C - GARAGES FOR B & D.

D - HOUSE WITH STUDIO/WORKSHOP.

E - TERRACE HOUSES WITH GARAGE.

F - DETACHED HOUSE.

G - PAIR OF SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES.

H - DETACHED, STONE HOUSE WITH THATCH IN VAMIRE.

P - PARKING.

X - PLAYING - HARD SURFACE.

Y - PLAYING - GRASS.

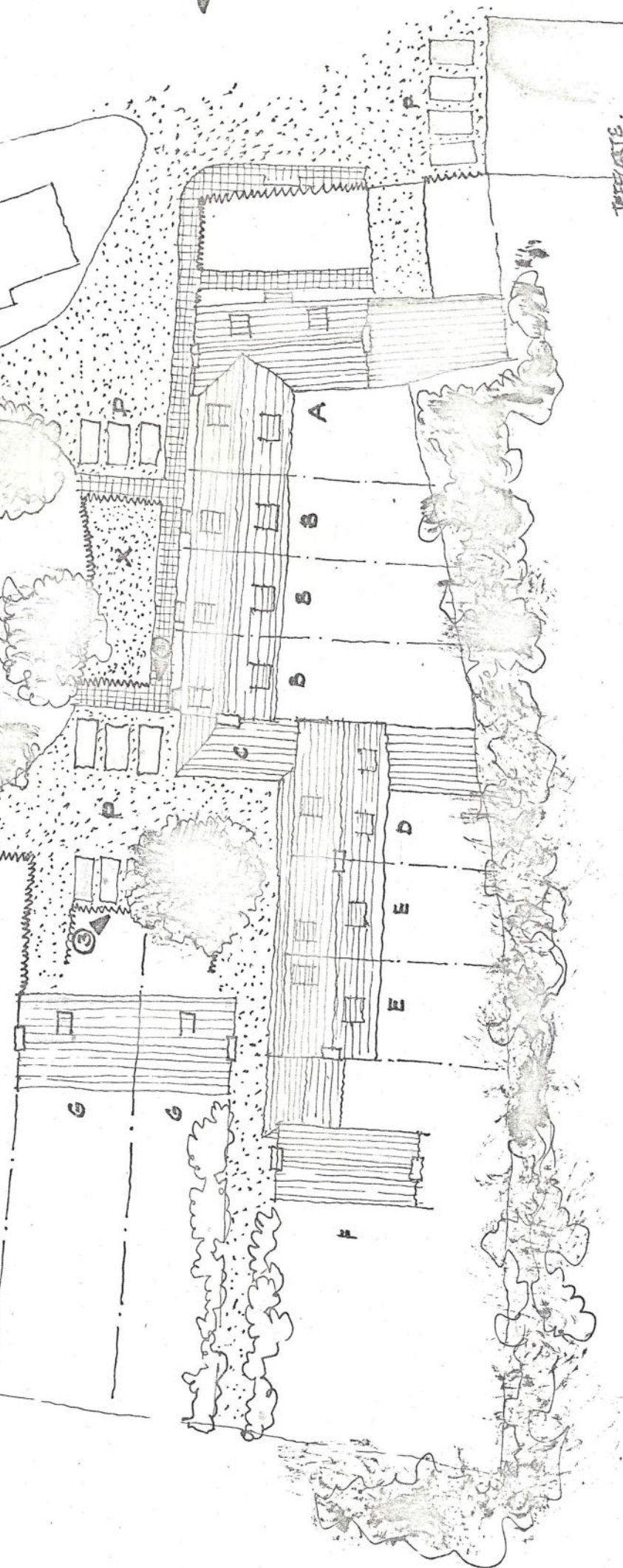
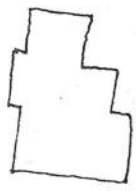
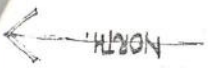
1" = 3'

1" = 2'

1" = 2'

1" = 2'

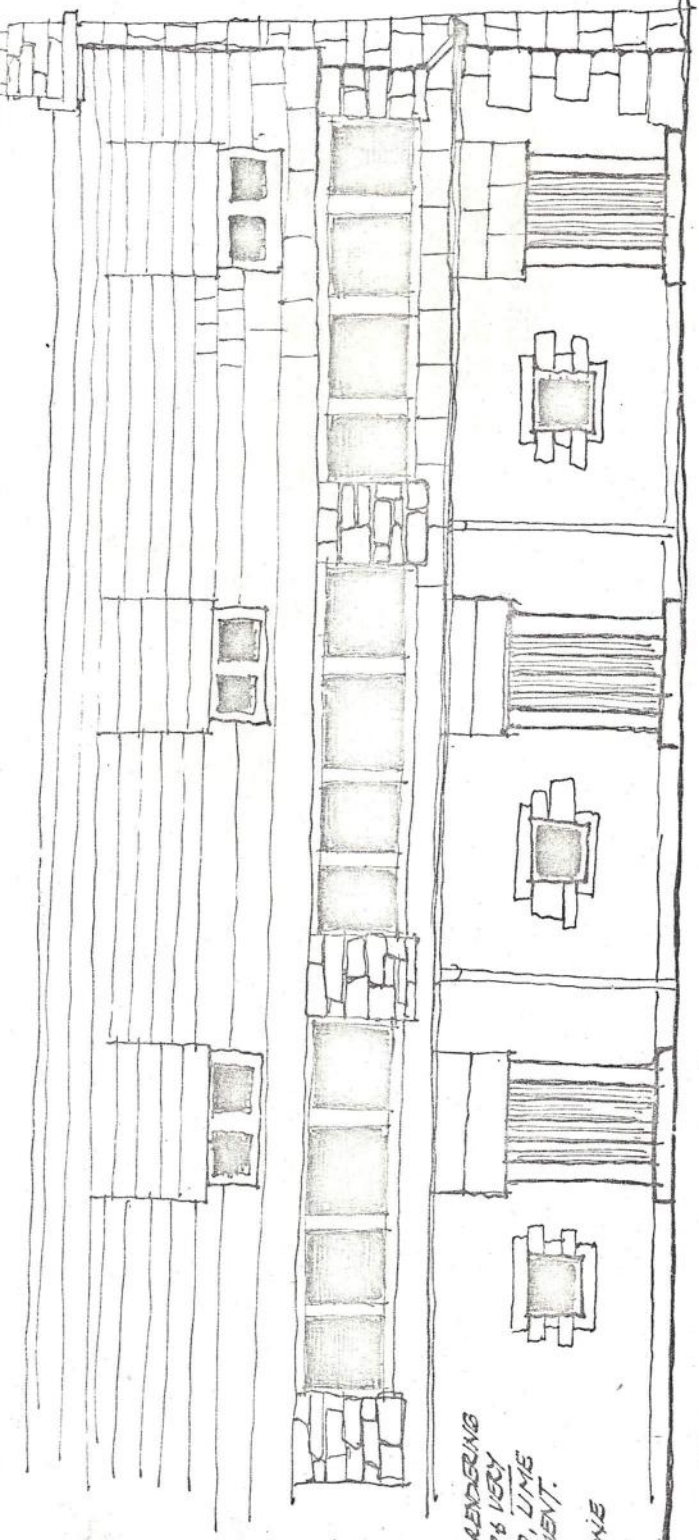
1" = 2'



JEFFREY E.  
SITE PLAN 1/500.

RAISTERS LANE DEVELOPMENT, SUTTON POINTS, BORSEY FOR SUTTON POINTS PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

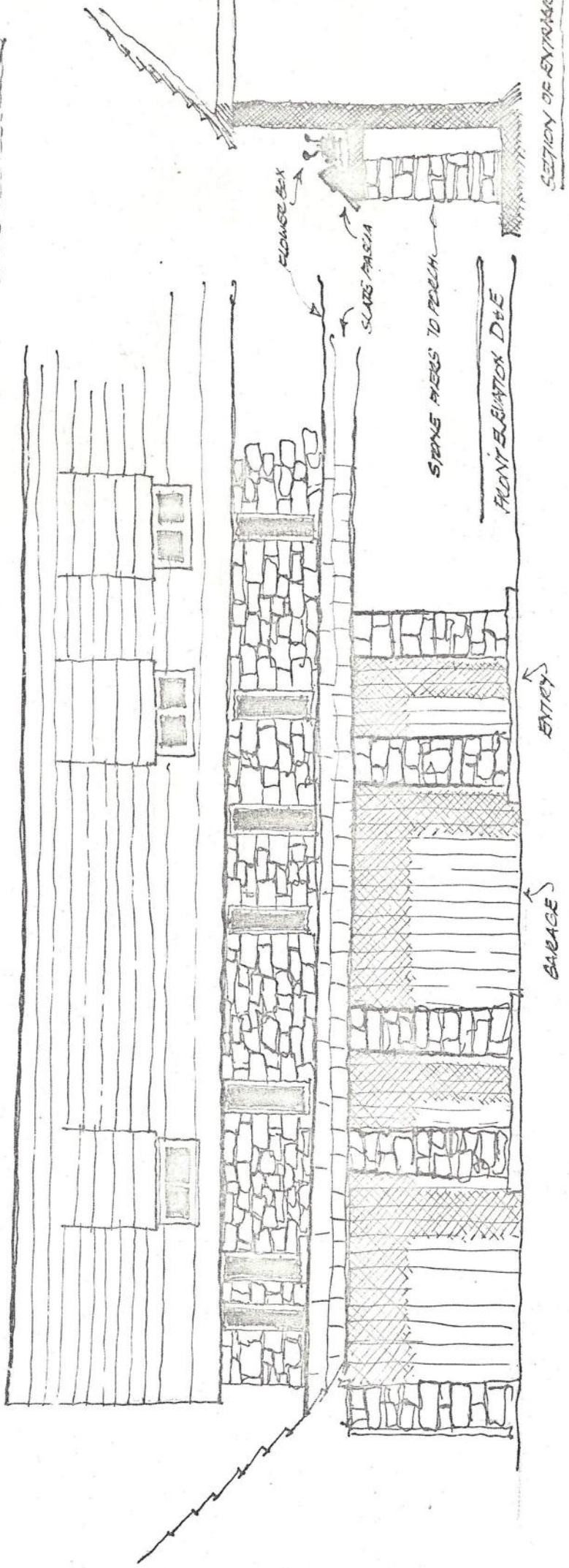




SLATE CILLAR BUTTER.  
 ROUND FLICE WALL  
 FEW WINDOWS FOR  
 PLASTER, MORE TO BACK.

FRONT ELEVATION TYPE

UNDECORATED RENDERING  
 CLEAN, SHARP & VERY  
 COARSE SAND, LIME  
 & WHITE CEMENT.  
 PORTLAND STONE  
 DRESSINGS.



FLOWER BOX  
 SLATE PAVING

STONE PIERS TO PORCH

FRONT ELEVATION D+E

SARAGE ← ENTRY

SECTION OF ENTRANCE

JEFFROME SEP 71. PLASTERERS LANE DEVELOPMENT. SUTTON POINTZ. DORSET. FOR SUTTON POINTZ PRESERVATION SOCIETY.



BERRING JOINTS MUST NOT BE SEEN

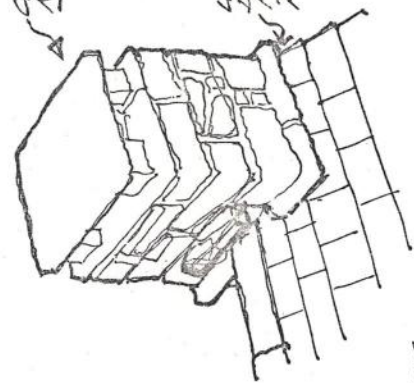
ADAPTATION OF TRADITIONAL DETAIL TO CONCRETE SLATE FIRST TWO COURSES 18" WIDE BUFFER COULSES 9" WIDE

SLATE ON LAPPEON LA WALLING

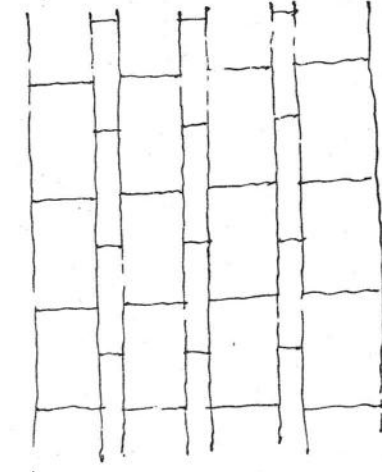
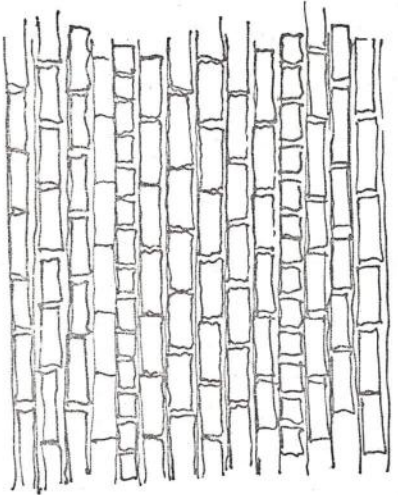
CHIMNEY, NO PUTS.

USE STONE DRIP & SPARKERS NO EXPOSED FLASHINGS

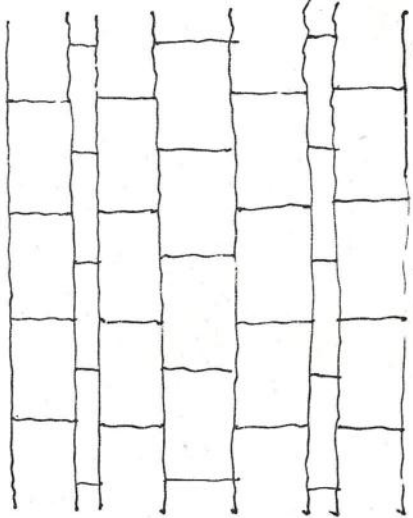
POINTING OF VERGES TO BE SET BACK FROM EDGE OF SLATES USE VERY COARSE SAND IN MORTAR.



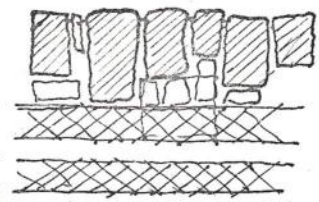
BRICK - STOCKS ONLY TO MATCH TRADITIONAL LOCAL BRICK. NEITHER BRIGHT NOR ANAEMIC. SNAP HEADERS EVERY SIXTH COURSE.



BLOCKS - ALTERNATE 3" WITH 9"



OR ONE COURSE OF 3" TO THREE OF 9"



SET BACK JOINTS SLIGHTLY BEHIND FACE OF STONE. USE WHITE CEMENT ONLY WITH PREDOMINANTLY LIMES MORTAR. USE CLEAN, SHARP VERY COARSE SAND.

SOME EXAMPLES OF DETAILS

JEFFERSON SEP 71. PLASTERERS LONG DEVELOPMENT. SUTTON POINTS. TORSET. AIR SUTTON POINTS PRESERVATION SOCIETY.



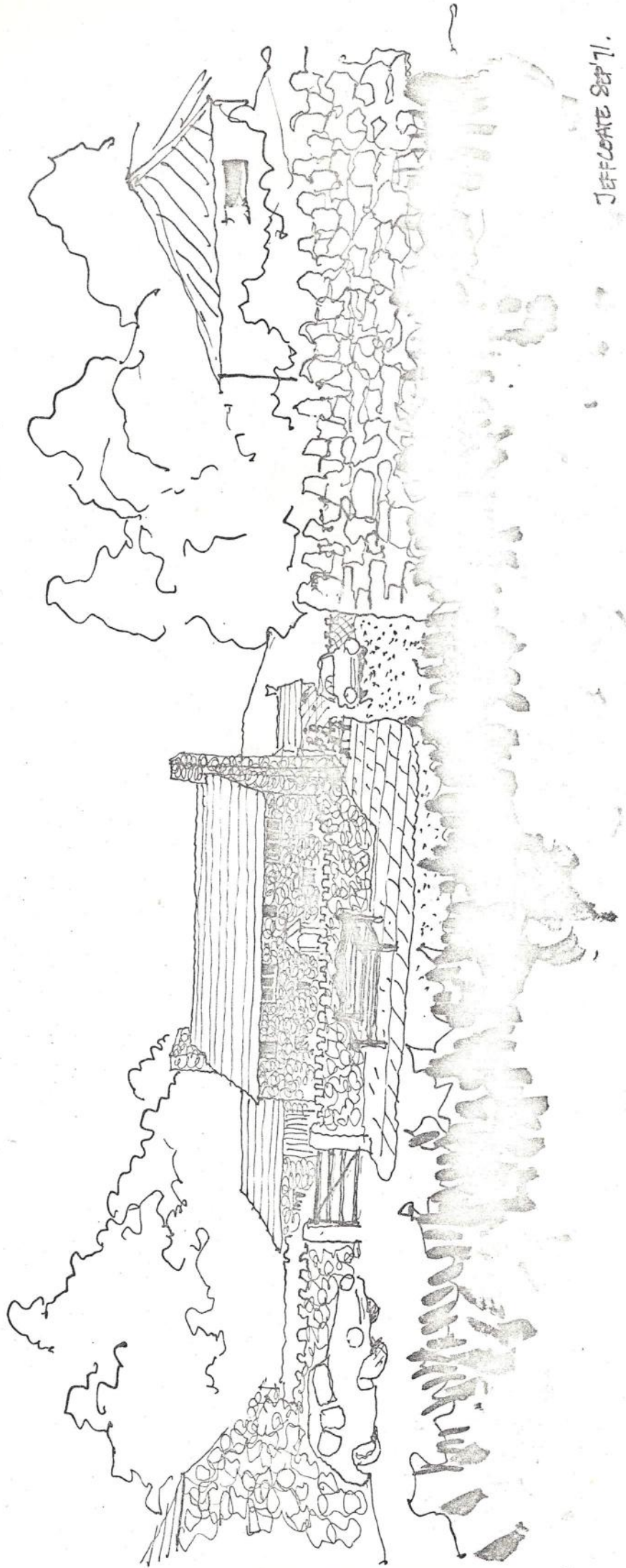


CLAUDE'S LANE - SOUTH BEHIND DORSET.

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JEFFCOATE SEP 71.





JEFFCOATE SEP 71.

② VIEW OF ENTRY TO SITE FROM PLAISTERS LANE  
PLAISTERS LANE DEVELOPMENT. SUTTON POINTZ, DORSET.  
SUTTON POINTZ PRESERVATION SOCIETY.



PROPOSED SEP '71.

(3)

PAISTERS LANE DEVELOPMENT. SUTTON POINT, COAST I.